

Candidate denies Web postings at DelDOT job

State auditor investigating

By Drew Volturo
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DOVER — The state auditor's office is investigating whether a state employee running for Kent County Levy Court made several political postings on the Internet during work hours on a state computer.

State Auditor R. Thomas Wagner Jr. said his office received a complaint last week — which also was sent to the Department of Transportation and local media — alleging that Wyoming resident George "Jody" Sweeney made numerous postings on the Newszap public issues forums during the normal workday.

"We've got the complaint. It should be easy to verify either it did or didn't happen," Mr. Wagner said Monday, but even if the auditor's office finds a violation, he said it will not divulge the results publicly.

"If a violation did occur, it's a situation for DelDOT to handle. It's a personnel matter."

The anonymous complaint sent to the Delaware State News included "a sampling" of posts on various public issues forums, citing more than 15 examples with the date and time of the posts.

Mr. Sweeney, a Democrat, is running against incumbent Republican Levy Court Commissioner W.G. Edmanson in the Nov. 4 election.

Mr. Sweeney, who is DelDOT's information technology services manager, said these types of accusations have surfaced before — about making



George Sweeney



R. Thomas Wagner Jr.

political Internet posts — and those claims were proven to be false. He said the postings were made while he was taking sick time or on leave.

"In no way have I ever used state resources to further my or any political agenda," Mr. Sweeney said. "Being in charge of state computers at DelDOT, I'm fully aware of the repercussions of those actions."

DelDOT workers' alleged misuse of state computers was the subject of several firings and controversy four years ago.

Department spokesman Darrel Cole said the agency is working with the auditor's office and the state's Department of Technology and Information in reviewing the complaint, but would not comment further because "it is a personnel matter."

In addition to the personal nature of the complaint being publicized, the timing did not sit well with Mr. Wagner, a Republican who said he receives such accusations shortly before an election.

"When people are running for public office, you hate getting involved in an election year," Mr. Wagner said. "But we're obligated to look at this in that it's fairly easy to verify if it happened."

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